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Metropolitan Museum of Art

AVE MARIA

"The Annunciation," by Roger van der Weyden.
Flemish School, Fifteenth Century.

To the readers of The Church Monthly the Ministers of the Riverside Church and the members of the Church Staff send their heartiest Christmas greetings and the most cordial good wishes for the New Year.

The Church Monthly family now comprises three thousand men and women living in all parts of the United States and in many foreign lands throughout the world. Our Christmas thoughts are of this wide circle of members and friends. We would express to you our deep sense of appreciation for every evidence of your interest.

It is our hope that wherever you may be we may come to know you more intimately. In the approaching year and in all years to come may the radiance of the Master's life shine in your lives with an ever increasing measure of spiritual happiness in the fellowship of Him Who is with us alway.

The Christ of History and the Christ of Experience

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ONCE more on Christmas Sunday morning we come to the church to celebrate the Christ. But which Christ? For any one reading what is afoot in books and magazines today observes that two Christs are in the minds of men, often confused, often apparently contradictory: the Christ of history and the Christ of experience.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king"—that is the Christ of history. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—that is the Christ of experience.

To some of us both these Christs are very real. One who has tarried long in Palestine thinks vividly of the Christ of history. To say, as a few have tried to say, that no such person ever existed, is to anybody who knows Palestine incredible. The story of the gospels fits the land as a man's glove fits his fingers. Repeatedly the traveler says to himself: This is the country of the gospels, this is the land of the record, across these hills the footsteps of the Master went. No scholar of any weight has ever doubted the historicity of Jesus.

Of course, there are many questions about whether he said this or that, did thus or so, about which gospel in a given case is the more reliable, about the historical trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel, for example, but such questions rise about any character who appears in history. Some of you here here this morning saw Abraham Lincoln, but even now to disentangle the Lincoln of history from the Lincoln of tradition is difficult. So legends did grow up about Christ. That process is inevitable, —man being what he is,—and sometimes we think we can see what the legendary elements are and how they came to be. But this inevitable twining of the legendary around the trellis of a great character does not make you suppose that Lincoln did not exist.

So the Christ of history is real. From Nazareth to Golgotha we can trace the outlines of his life and see the major emphases of his teaching. But all this is not enough for vital religion. The Christ of history lived long ago. His coming was the most significant event in the spiritual history of man and we do well to celebrate it in this radiant festival of the Christian year. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass." Yet all that is not vital religion. And it does not become such until the Christ of history passes over into the Christ of experience. And because this transition is not made by many, there are multitudes today who think of Jesus as an ancient figure, legendary and ideal, a kind of religious King Arthur, who centuries ago gathered his Knights of the Round Table and wrought chivalrous exploits.

> Thy vision fades in ancient shades;
> How should we follow Thee?

This problem of translating the Christ of history into the Christ of experience runs back as far as Paul. In a high, fine sense Paul was a mystic. That is to say, he could not be content with second-hand religion. Whatever religion he had had to be his own, spontaneously in him and part and parcel of him. Even Christ, therefore, could not suffice for Paul if by Christ you mean only a character in history. He said once, "even though we have known Christ after

the flesh, yet now we know him so no more," which is another way of saying, My Christ is more than just the Jesus of Nazareth who walked in Galilee. Once, when he was talking about the birth of Jesus he said, "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you," which is to say, he felt the necessity, if religion was to be vital, of some such thing happening as centuries afterwards Phillips Brooks put into his hymn, "O holy Child of Bethlehem,...be born in us today." And once Paul summed up this whole matter of translating the Christ of history into the Christ of experience by saying: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

On this Christmas Sunday morning, let us consider this serious matter.

> Though Christ a thousand times
> In Bethlehem be born,
> If He's not born in thee
> Thy soul is still forlorn.

To be sure, Christ did perform an objective historic ministry and everybody, one way or another, shares in its benefits even though nothing ever happens to him that could remotely be described as having Christ born in him. So Copernicus swung the gateway of a new era in astronomy, and though a man never heard of Copernicus he would share some of the benefits of his great work. If I should tell you, then, that this is the birthday of Copernicus, you would feel a mild interest. He did his business a great while ago and fell on sleep and we are all indebted to him, and that is the end of it. But even if you were not a Christian you would feel this morning that Jesus needs more intimate treatment. Were I to tell you of a family that always keeps Shakespeare's birthday, you would feel a subtler meaning there than the memory of Copernicus would evoke. The father of that family is a poet and when Shakespeare's natal day comes round they light the candles, call in a circle of congenial friends, and celebrate the evening with the master's poetry. You could not keep the birthday of Shakespeare without having the spirit of poetry within you. Even there in some way the poet of history must become the poet of experience.

There are millions this week who will not thus vitally keep Christmas. To them Jesus will be an ancient character who nearly two thousand years ago did his work, and while they will acknowledge that he lifted the level of man's spiritual life and that they are indebted to him, only so will they keep Christmas. That, however, is not vital Christianity. Vital Christianity has always had another note.

> But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
> A present help is he;
> And faith has still its Olivet,
> And love its Galilee.

What does that mean? How can one reasonably and without sentimentality come into that? What is the intelligible process that, without doing injustice to a man's mental faculties, causes the Christ of history to become the Christ of experience?

In the first place, this transition occurs when we recognize the real nature of Jesus' greatness. There are two kinds of greatness in this world. One is the genius of the gigantic individual. Napoleon Bonaparte, for example, was a tremendous individual and sometimes a man studying him feels as he felt when first he saw the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, uncanny, weird, a stupendous stunt in nature as though the earth had tried that sort of thing once but never need try it again. So Napoleon Bonaparte suggests no profound meanings, reveals nothing permanently reproducible in human life. He is a gigantic gorge to look at. When, however, you step into the presence of another kind of man, like Michael Faraday, how different the impression is! For Michael Faraday is not primarily a gigantic individual at all. He is simply a revealer. He uncovers something universal in the world that always has been here and that men have not known. His greatness is not so much in himself as in what he unveils, something woven into the fabric of the universe from everlasting to everlasting that you and I can use and our children

after us. Thus to reveal the universal is the highest kind of greatness in any realm.

This truth rises into emphasis and distinction as soon as we lift the illustration of it from the physical to the spiritual. What is great poetry? Great poetry is poetry that says beautifully what we all have it in us to say and would love to have said if we had known how. Read any great poetry about nature, about love, about God, and see how frequently you say, How often I have felt that and wished I could express it! This truth came poignantly home to me when I saw for the first time the Sistine Madonna. It is uniquely beautiful but, after all, the basis of its appeal is that it says something universal about motherhood and childhood. One looking at it felt that he understood better the love which his own mother bore him. Something eternal shines in that Madonna's eyes.

Between these two kinds of greatness, the uniqueness of the gigantic individual and the glory of the universal revelation, where would you put Jesus? Undoubtedly with the latter! He kept insisting on it himself. "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." The glory of his life, as he saw it, lay in the universal life that he revealed. "I am the door," he said. You do not stop with the door; you go through it to what it leads to. "I am the way." You do not end with a way; you go along it to what it arrives at. So Jesus saw his own significance in terms of the universal thing that he revealed, and whenever anybody tried personally to flatter him he resented it and once he came back like thunder: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." He was not trying to be a gigantic individual; he was trying to reveal the eternal purpose.

When, therefore, you endeavor to keep Christ back in history, he will not stay there. He comes out of history. He leaves Bethlehem behind him. He shakes the dust of Nazareth's streets from his sandals. He comes to us in our modern life and he says to us, "I reveal the universal. The thing that I reveal is in you, flickering and dim, it may be, but in you. The life for which I stood belongs to all men and no man comes to his glory until he has achieved it." You cannot keep him back in history. Can you circumscribe even what Copernicus did by one country or one age? What have geography and the calendar to do with universals? How much less can you keep Christ in Palestine or draw the boundaries of the first century around him. He is not simply the Jesus of history, but the Christ of experience.

When Lincoln died, Stanton stood weeping at his bedside and said, "He now belongs to the ages." That was a true way of expressing his conviction that there was something universal in that character.

Look up from that toward Christ. What does he mean to us? The Christ of history! But we do not understand the Christ of history until he has become in us the Christ of experience.

This leads us to the second stage in the progress of our thought, that if we think of Jesus as the revealer of the universal, we see at once that he is unescapable. Just as soon as Faraday had let loose in the world the meaning of electricity, man could not run away from it. You cannot let loose in the world a thing like electricity and then avoid it. Henceforth electricity haunted men. It plucked them by the sleeve. It tapped them on the shoulder, saying, Use me! When once something like that has gotten started it cannot be escaped.

So Christ let loose in this world a kind of life that mankind never has been able to escape. Make that just as definite and concrete as you will and see how true it is. "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." Greatness measured by usefulness —he let that loose in the world. What a demented idea that seemed at first! Ask Pharaoh, ask Sennacherib and Xerxes! Ask any philosopher, like Aristotle! What a mad idea! Yet we never have been able to

get away from it. No greatness except in usefulness—that haunts us. It has made the pomp of selfish emperors look ridiculous. It has stolen from the reputation of selfish wealth its glamor. "Benefactor of humanity"—that was the title men once gave their tyrants. It is now the title which Frenchmen give to Pasteur, a paralytic and the son of a tanner, because of his usefulness. Emerson writes, "He is great who confers the most benefits." Poets catch the idea up and sing,

> ...that best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
> Of kindness and of love.

Even Bismarck, hardened in power and in pride, comes to the end of his days taking special satisfaction, among all the medals that hung upon his uniforms, in one conferred on him as a young man because he saved his groom from drowning. No greatness except in usefulness—you cannot escape that Christ.

Or "Blessed are the peacemakers"; "love one another; even as I have loved you"; "love your enemies, and do them good"—you cannot get away from that. Even Cicero, one of the noblest Romans of them all, so hated his enemy Clodius that almost two years after the death of that enemy at Bovillae Cicero was still counting time from that event: "the 620th day after the battle of Bovillae." But such unrelenting vindictiveness would seem contemptible even to common folk today. You cannot escape the ministry of Christ's goodwill.

Christmas Sunday is a fitting time to tell the story of General Pickett's baby. It was in the Civil War in those last slaughterous days when the two armies locked horns outside Richmond—the cruelest days of the conflict. Cold harbor had been fought with terrific execution. Then, one night, the Confederate lines were lighted with bonfires and the Union sentinels, calling across the little space between the outposts, learned the explanation and sent word to General Grant's headquarters that the Confederates were celebrating General Pickett's new-born baby, word of whose arrival had just reached the army. By order of General Grant fires were lighted also in the Federal lines to help the Confederates celebrate the birth of Pickett's child, and next day Union officers sent a graceful letter through the lines under a flag of truce, bearing to General Pickett the congratulation of his enemies. That story lights up a great truth. As you contemplate the scene you see that what was crazy there, mad, demented, execrable, was not the goodwill, care for a family, love of a child. That was sensible. But the hatred, the vindictiveness, the fratricidal strife—that was insane.

We cannot escape from that Christ who walks out of history to us today with his gospel of goodwill. He haunts even our legislative assemblies and in the councils of our governments is saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

This unescapableness of Christ comes far down inside our individual lives. If he reveals something universal it is inside us. Is there anybody here who has not tried to get away from that Christ-side of him? Is there anybody here who has not said, I will have no more of it; I will break its bands asunder; I will cast away its cords and have my own way? Have we ever actually succeeded? Something is there that we cannot be rid of. We have to deal with it one way or another, either to follow it, be true to it, or else be haunted by it. There is something in us that holds on and follows after and calls back.

In the greatest religious poem of the nineteenth century Francis Thompson calls it the Hound of Heaven. Francis Thompson ought to know. He went to London as a student. He fell into evil ways. He lost his money. He became a drug addict. He went from bad to worse until he got down to holding a horse's head for sixpence. Few men ever were lower down than Francis Thompson. Yet still, as he said, there came after him the pursuing feet of the Hound of Heaven.

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.

Can it be that there is no one here who is being pursued by that Hound of Heaven? You cannot keep Christ back in history. He presses on to become the Christ of experience.

This leads us to the next stage in the progress of our thought, that if all this is true, then Christ inevitably becomes the symbol of our better self. He impersonates it; he incarnates it; he makes it picturesque and compelling. He is our realized ideal. This is worth saying because I am sure that some of you already have been thinking: Why call the better side of life Christ? Why not give it abstract names, like goodness, unselfishness, goodwill, magnanimity? Why give the abstract virtue a proper name out of history?

One answer to that can at once be given: Ideas are poor things until they are incarnate.

Did you ever fall in love with unselfishness? Of course not! Nobody ever falls in love with unselfishness any more than one falls in love with the meridian of Greenwich. What we fall in love with is not unselfishness but unselfish people. It is when an idea becomes incarnate that it becomes powerful. Nobody understands human nature—I venture here to be dogmatic—until he sees that at the heart of us we are photographic plates taking pictures of people. We may think we argue ourselves into righteousness, but we do not. We may think we will ourselves into righteousness. We do not. Intellect and will are very important, but in this regard they are not primary; they are secondary. Primarily we are photographic plates taking pictures of people.

Somebody incarnates sin until it becomes irresistibly alluring—that does the business. Somebody incarnates goodness until it becomes fascinating and transforming—that works the consequence. Nothing ever vitally gets through to us until it is impersonated, and the photograph is taken on our souls. At the heart of us we are sensitive plates exposed to people.

This is one of the implied meanings in M. Coué's saying that imagination is stronger than will. Of course it is. I go up to our new building on Riverside Drive and try to climb around on the steel beams where the riveters are at work. I cannot do it. What is the matter? My intellect? I insist my intellect is normal. Is it my will? I insist my will is sound. The trouble is that my imagination keeps picturing myself falling off. I try to argue myself out of it. That does no good. I put my will into it. That gets me nowhere. I imagine myself falling off and my imagination is stronger than my intellect or my will.

Now, Paul never studied modern psychology but in his own way Paul was a great psychologist, and this is his manner of putting it: "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." Just so! We face Christ until reflected in us he is reproduced in us. Paul uses the mirror figure because they did not have photographic plates in those days, but if they had I suspect he would have used that. We face Christ until his picture is taken on our souls. That is what had happened to Paul when he said, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

They call us modernists in this church. Very well, let us be modernists! But remember that our modernism is not what modernism too often tends to become: a set of abstract hypotheses, a system of theoretical propositions. Our religion is impersonated. Christianity is Christ. And to know him and love him until his spirit is reproduced in us and the Christ of history becomes the Christ of experience—that is Christianity.

All of this leads to the conclusion, that the Jesus of history, so far from being historical alone, insists on coming over and being a challenging fact to every one of us. The character in Mr. H. G. Wells' novel who said "I'm not a man but a mob" spoke for all of us. We have a miscellaneous, heterogeneous population in our souls, good, bad, and indifferent, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in all their various degrees, and Christ there also. I never met a man so bad that in some corner of his life the Christ was not present too.

In this situation our problem is somehow to identify ourselves with one part of ourselves until it becomes our real self and life is organized around it and the rest subordinated. Our morning text from Paul is an illustration of that. For he also was a mob—read his seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and see him living in the turmoil of his heterogeneous population, so contrary minded that what he would do he did not, and what he would not that he did! There was only one way out for Paul to unity and peace: to identify himself with one part of himself so that it became his real self and everything else was either subordinated or sloughed off.

That is what that text means: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." I have heard that talked about as though it were theology. That is not primarily theology. That is primarily a bona fide psychological experience, a real and transforming process that can go on inside a man, where he identifies himself with the Christ in himself until that is his real life and when he lives it means Christ.

I never shall forget the day a lad came into my office, a whipped boy if ever there was one. He put his head down on his arms and would not so much as lift his eyes to look at me. And he might well be whipped. He was confessing a gross sin. Nor shall I forget how he did look at me when, after a half hour's talk I said, "You are a fine, clean, high-minded boy." "My God!" he said, "My God!" But I was right. He never would have come to me if there had not been that side to him. It was that which was disturbing him. That was why he could not be a contented beast. His problem was somehow to identify himself with the Christ in himself till that became his real self and he sloughed off the rest.

You cannot keep Christ back in history. He is inside of every one of us and on this Christmas Sunday he is saying, Identify yourself with the Christ life, until the Christ of history becomes the Christ of experience. This is the central appeal of personal Christianity. I am weary of ecclesiasticism. I am often sick of controversial theology. But this is something deep and abiding.

Recall how Richard Wagner wrote some of his greatest operas. He played them on his own piano. He had no theater. He had no orchestra. He had no chorus. He had to play them on his own piano. He could not hear them as they would really sound orchestrated and rendered with many voices. He had to imagine how they would sound. So he wrote Tristan and Isolde. Years afterward he had not yet heard it. He could get no theater to produce it. He could listen to it only as he played it himself.

So was it with Christ. Long ago in Palestine he played the Gospel on his own life. But you cannot adequately play the Gospel even on his life; it takes an orchestra; it requires a chorus. It takes communities, cities, nations, the world. Jesus has never heard how his Gospel would really sound. To enter into that problem, to catch his spirit, to reproduce his life in ourselves, our families, our nations, and our world until the Christ of history becomes the Christ of universal experience—that is Christianity.

(Continued on page 32)

Metropolitan Museum of Art

ADORATION OF THE MAGI

By Quentin Massys, Flemish School, Fifteenth Century.

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL SPIRIT, Who art the light of all our seeing and the hope of all our expectation, we turn our hearts in reverence and desire to Thee. Thou seest with what anxieties and irritations, too fretted by the things of this world and concerned about our fortunes here, we have come in prayer to Thee. Forgive us that like unquiet pools we cannot reflect the blue of the calm sky. We have come to Thee because we need tranquillity and strength and peace and calmness from above. O Thou from whom cometh all courage and certainty, flow into us in a deep flood this day and let little things be submerged in great things and the too fretful anxieties of time be seen in the quiet horizons of the abiding. So grant that our worship may beget in us calmness of spirit, wisdom of insight, depth of intuition, certainty about Thee that shall make us strong through all the days to come.

For all light and loveliness that shine upon our lives we bless Thee, but, above all, for the babe of Bethlehem. See us, all too sophisticated, full of worldly wisdom, how with humble footsteps and reverent hearts we come to the manger of the child. Lead us away from our too great sophistication to the humility of childlikeness today. May the Kingdom of Heaven belong to us these days ahead because in spirit we have become teachable as children. Refresh and renew our lives again. We are too careworn; we grow old before our time. We need to learn the spirit of the boy Jesus and his fellowship with Thee.

Grant Thy gracious care upon our homes. Thou seest us anxious and disturbed by the crumbling family life of this nation. If here, within reach of our supplication, some household today fears a rift in the lute, feels the foundations of the family shake, let the Spirit of the birthday of the revealer of Thy love recover the harmony, heal the breach before it be too late. Save us from our selfishness and irascibilities. Build Thou up in us the holy household, we beseech Thee.

We thank Thee for the faces of young men and women long separated from us in school and college who have come back to gather with us about the family hearth and in the church's fellowship. For all temptations conquered in these days behind, for all upbuilding of personality and strengthening of mind we bless Thee; for all noble purposes chosen, for all sins overcome, we thank Thee. We beseech Thee that in this renewed fellowship in the household and the church there may come new life from Thee to them and us.

Save us, O God of eternal life, from worshiping here as though we were no more than a company of living folk upon this earth. Did not shepherds long ago think they heard out of the heavenlies the song of angels speaking peace? So we would have our angels, too, in our skies, the dear dead whom we have loved long since and lost awhile, who are not dead but live with Thee. There will be homes this Christmas season where faces that hitherto have made the house to shine will be absent. God grant that nevertheless we may feel their presence, know the brush of angels' wings upon our spirits, hear their songs out of the unseen, and worship in the thought and love of them.

We beseech Thee for Thy grace upon Thy churches. We thank Thee for the birthday of Jesus because it calls us, of

whatever name or sign, back to him. God forgive us that we have become so separate, various, and divided. Yet in this we are bound together, brothers in one faith—we do love Christ and on his birthday we gather humbly at the manger of our Master and our Friend. So bind us together, men and women of all the churches, more firmly, we beseech Thee, because we are drawn close to him, the best we know, the greatest asset of our faith, revealer of the divine in Thee and the divine in us.

We beseech Thee for Thy guiding hand upon our nation and all nations. So long ago the angels sang a song of peace above the fields of Bethlehem! So long tarries the day of its fulfilment! God have mercy upon us for our pettinesses, our hatreds, our misunderstandings, for our consent to prejudices of race and rank and color and nation that divide us! Remind us once more that Thou art the Father of all of us, that all souls are Thine, that we are brothers one of another, and teach us that deep lesson of love, without learning which there is no hope for humankind.

Cross now, we pray Thee, the inner thresholds of our lives. Pass Thou through our most secret doors and help us. Grant unto us the consolation of Thy Spirit in our bereavements, the steadying of Thy presence in our shaken and melancholy hours, the guidance of Thy great purposes in the days of our prosperity and fortune, and in whatsoever condition of mind, body, or estate the littlest child here has come to worship, do Thou go down Thine own secret stair into that life and bring Thy benediction.

We ask it in the name of Christ.

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DR. FOSDICK'S SERMON

(Continued from page 29)

Prayer

ETERNAL GOD, our Father, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt send us out to be Christians. From the birthday of the Christ, with all the loveliness of its memories and its hopes, with the deep faiths it kindles, with the lofty aspirations it arouses, send us out to be Christians. Help us in our own degree to reproduce the spirit of Jesus, remembering that if a man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. Amen.

▽

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on December 23, 1928, at the Park Avenue Baptist Church.

The Growing Church

At the Communion Service on December 1 the Riverside Church received into membership thirty-one friends. Six of these are temporary residents of New York and therefore have become affiliated members. Those who have come into full membership this month are

Miss Eva Birch
Mr. and Mrs. Frithiof Carl Borgeson
Mr. Donald Brookshire
Miss Alice Callahan
Miss Harryette Creasy
Mrs. Roger P. Deschamps
Mr. Charles Edey Fay
Miss Anna E. Foster
Miss Edna R. Greer
Mrs. C. Ivar Hellstrom
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Jambor
Miss Violet Jambor
Miss Ethel Jensen
Mrs. Emma Lohmann
Miss Helen Ide Morse
Mr. Donald P. Seldon
Mr. and Mrs. F. Louis Slade
Mr. Charles F. Uhl
Mrs. Peter A. Vasilieff
Mr. and Mrs. Martin G. Wilkinson
Miss Nina A. Yeomans

New Forms of Christmas Worship

By Omar P. Goslin

THE Riverside Guild, which embraces the various activities of the young people of the Riverside Church, sponsors regular Sunday evening services of worship in the Assembly Hall of the new building. These services are projected with the hope that an emphasis upon beauty and symbolism will recover for our Protestant congregations some of the elements of value and the dramatic power of the mort ritualistic services of worship. In order to give utterance more genuinely to the thought and spirit of our age, new modes of expression are substituted for set forms of ritual. To provide the possibility of complete expression and to create in its truest sense an atmosphere of worship for those participating, it is necessary to use a wide choice of subject matter presented in varying artistic forms.

For some of these services the shorter drama has provided the most adequate interpretation of the theme. The service on Faith was built around the morality play by William Butler Yeats entitled *The Hour-Glass,* in which a Wise Man who has refused to believe in God or heaven is taught by experience that "the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are unseen are eternal." The theme Light was presented by the use of a Biblical drama written by Mary P. Hamlin called *He Came Seeing,* which tells the story of a blind boy healed by Jesus, whose sight cost him a terrific price because of the mental blindness of those who would not see.

For other services biblical or poetic material has been adapted to develop the theme. The story of the Prodigal Son was rendered by the use of selections from Sullivan's oratorio to interpret the theme of Love. For a service on Pride, Longfellow's poem *Robert of Sicily* was divided into dramatic episodes, showing the downfall of a proud king and his redemption by repentance.

Again, an idea has been worked out and has been made concrete by means of tableau and episode. A service on Prayer started with the Buddhist conception of the wheel of life. It proceeded through the sun worship of the American Indian, the Greek temple processional, the contrasting prayers of Pharisee and Publican, and culminated in the experience of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Thanksgiving service consisted of two episodes, describing America's blessing and her obligations.

In all of these services hymns, scriptural readings and prayers are made to harmonize with and to express the theme.

The Christmas season, because of the wealth of music, art and drama which it has inspired, and because of the richness of tradition which surrounds it, making it the center of our religious thought, is particularly well expressed through this medium of worship. The services throughout December, reflecting all the romance and beauty of Christmas traditions, aim to deepen our appreciation of the true significance of the Christian message.

The first of these tells the Christmas story through the music of carols which have been sung throughout the centuries by people of various nations. For the processional the ancient Latin hymn *Adeste Fideles* is used. Three English carols,

God Rest Ye Merrie Gentlemen, I Saw Three Ships, O Little Town of Bethlehem, are sung by a male quartette and chorus. The French carol *The First Noël* is interpreted by tableaux as it is being rendered by the group of carolers. The congregation sings the German carol *Holy Night, Peaceful Night,* which furnishes the background for a period of meditation and prayer.

For the second program a play has been chosen, *The Dust of the Road,* by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman. The action takes place on Christmas Eve in the early seventies. A tramp with wounded hands and feet is turned away from the door by the coldness of a selfish woman. Another tramp who has known the bitter remorse of having betrayed a great friendship comes to prey upon her conscience and that of her husband as they are about to betray a trust. In saving them from so great a mistake, he gives back to them the joy of living and thereby they discover the true spirit of Christmas.

On the Sunday evening preceding Christmas, the coming of Christ will be retold as it is recorded in the Scriptures. As the service proceeds, one will hear the voice of the prophet proclaiming the coming of the Prince of Peace whose name shall be called "Wonderful"; the Angel of the Lord will appear unto Mary; shepherds tending their flocks will hear the songs of the heavenly chorus bringing tidings of great joy; Wise Men will come from the East following the star of Bethlehem which guides them to the place where Jesus lies; and finally, as all join in adoration of the Christ Child during a period of scriptural meditation, we shall hear again His summons to the abundant life and His command, "Go ye into all the world."

The final service in the Christmas series will present the story of *The Other Wise Man* by Henry Van Dyke. A fourth Wise Man starts toward Bethlehem bearing his gifts for the King. As he journeys he comes upon those who need his care, and one by one he surrenders to them the jewels intended for the Master. For years he searches for Jesus and finds Him only as He bears His cross toward Golgotha. In the sacrifice of this Wise Man we see another way of worshipping Christ—a path which all men must tread if they are to become true followers of Jesus.

Women's Bible Class

The Class meets Sundays at 9:45 at Temple Beth-El. All other sessions are held at the Riverside Church. The membership reflects a cross section of folks in New York. Visitors from distant lands and every state in the Union, students, business and professional women, and regulars who have been making the history of the Class these many years, are on its roll. You, reader, are invited to join. Make yourself known to Miss M. Emma Williams, President, and contribute to the fellowship of this group, whose keyword is Friendliness.

Under the Chairman, Miss Marguerite J. Smith, the professional and business women's groups are planning a program for certain Monday evenings at Riverside Church. Watch for calendar announcement.

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Heartsease Home

According to tradition, the Class met on November 18 early in the afternoon to sew for Heartsease Home, where tiny waifs and

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WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The Giant Loom

If one looks hard enough and thinks long enough the whole wide world will seem to be a network of "Things" being sent back and forth among the nations, as if the merchant ships were mere shuttles on God's giant loom, weaving back and forth His pattern for mankind. And the name of that pattern may be "For none of us liveth unto himself"; or possibly, with a warmer thread: "Little children, love one another"; or even, on a still more difficult strand: "Father, I pray that they may be *one.*"

Under the general topic of "International Threads" the Women's Society will consider the weaving of the threads on this giant loom at 10:30 Monday morning, January 6, in the Riverside building.

We have become conscious of the pattern our American commerce has been weaving with tireless zeal—seeing to it that all the world and his wife goes riding in Ford cars, fills his tank and lights his home with Standard Oil, snaps that "picture ahead" with an Eastman Kodak, sews his clothes with a Singer Sewing Machine, entertains himself with Hollywood films. What we do not always see is the picture behind the demand; how, in the far places, it is generally the American missionary who quite unconsciously is the first drummer for any commodity: see him entering a town for the first time—often a town so unknown and insignificant that even the name of it is not listed in any office of any firm on earth.

But all the world and his wife are fascinated by the sheer wonder of the newcomer: "What a trouble he is to himself!" they sigh in gentle pity at his folly, as tooth brushes and hot water bottles, beds and pillows, alarm clocks and typewriters, sewing machines and oil lamps emerge from boxes and fill his simple home. Then, by natural stages, the continuous familiarity of seeing these things in daily use makes the "trouble" begin to seem like a convenience...the convenience presently is turning into an envious longing...then the longing materializes, to fill a positive need. And behold! A new commercial thread has been spun from curiosity and the inescapable lure of imitation. The sun is no longer a sufficient alarm clock! And a town not even listed in America is written into the map of commerce. Another international pattern has been started!

It works both ways. For not long ago a sewing machine agent imagined he had arrived in China to demonstrate his machine. But one day while he was showing how his "iron tailor" could run up a seam in the twinkling of an eye, the gaping crowd began questioning: "Pardon my rudeness, but are you related to that other Foreign Devil, the one with the Book of the Celestial Doctrine?" "How he did talk, that man! On fire! I have been burning ever since to get certain points straight; perhaps you, being also an Over-the-Ocean person will consent to illuminate me"—and out poured question on question, theological, spiritual, ethical, sanitary, legal, or what-not, as the case might be. Especially what-not! With a bewildered agent becoming minister, doctor, lawyer, girl's advisor, glad of every scrap of church training he could muster from the past. For the world and his wife seem to want more than *things*....

It is this something "more" which has caused the giant loom to weave Christian international threads for over a hundred years. For it did not seem enough to let commerce comb the globe: we believed in our oil, our automobiles, our cameras, our watches. But above all we believed in the

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THE GIANT LOOM

(Continued from page 35)

hunger of all men everywhere for a God who satisfies. For such a universal need we sent a universal remedy. Every ship that crosses the ocean deals in this commerce also.

All of which is mere preamble for the January program, which will deal with an even more picturesque angle of the threads on the loom, as far as the average woman is concerned. You and your friends are invited.

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WOMEN'S BIBLE CLASS

(Continued from page 34)

their destitute mothers are cared for, until homes can be provided. More than fifty class members were present and a goodly number of layettes were made, as well as many other gifts assembled.

At 6:30 dinner was served under the direction of Mrs. Eugene McK. Froment, as Chairman.

Miss Olga Zundel, cellist 17 years old, who was born in China of Russian parentage, played several groups by Glazunoff. Miss Zundel plays with rare feeling which explained why she had won the Walter E. Naumburg Fellowship in Music last year.

Mr. Horace E. Coleman, formerly Honorary National Secretary of the Japan Sunday School Association, showed stereopticon pictures of the beautiful cherry blossoms, the lovely Japanese gardens and the exquisite temples and shrines. A slogan of his is

> Study Geography until for you there
> is no foreign land,
> Study Humanity until for you there
> is no foreign man.

In his address he made Japan and Japanese no longer foreign or foreigner. He was, indeed, a maker of friendly relations for this Oriental country.